ANNEX A

List of Interviews:

UN Agencies:

UNCO:	Michael Semple Sabrina Kassam-Jan
UNDP:	Sitara Knut Ostby
UNICEF:	Ellen van Kalmthout Niloufar Pourzand
UNHCR:	Katharina Lumpp Fatima Safi
WFP:	Denise Brown Michael Sackett Fayyaz Shah
WHO:	Dr. Rana Graber
CDAP/Afghan Women's Network:	Najia Zewari
UNCHS:	Homa Sabri Samantha Reynolds Rahela Hashim

NGOs:

Women's Commission:	Sippi Azerbaijani-Moghaddam
SCA:	Carol Le Duc
NCA:	Leena Atmar
IRC:	Haneef Atmar
ACBAR:	Nancy Dupree
ADA:	Abdul Razique Samadi
CHA:	Salma Waqvi Patricia Omidian

ANNEX B

TERMS OF REFERENCE

UN GENDER &/OR WOMEN'S RIGHTS CAPACITY; BEST USE REVIEW

Background: The aid community in Afghanistan has been grappling with the challenge of determining how best to address the rights of Afghan women and gender-related issues for some time. Since the arrival of the Taliban in 1994/96 the debate on these issues has often been contentious; this has, in turn, impacted on the attitude of, and approach by, assistance and other actors.

In November, 1997, an inter-agency gender mission resulted in a number of conclusions and recommendations. Since then there have been some changes - and, no doubt, some things have not changed – both in and outside the ambit of aid agency activity. It is thus considered opportune to review how a gender and/or women's rights advisory capacity in the Office of the UN Coordinator can best support ongoing policy development and related activities within the aid community.

Objective: to consult a cross-section of aid agencies/colleagues to ascertain (a) different approaches to/action on the issue of gender and/or women's rights and (b) viewpoints on the type of support required from a gender and/or women's rights capacity in the Office of the UN Coordinator.

Tasks:

- Consult a cross-section of colleagues in Peshawar and Islamabad, including visiting colleagues from Afghanistan, (a) on current approaches to/and action on issues of gender and/or women's rights (eg. extent to which agencies are interested in addressing gender and/or women's rights issues, extent to which agencies are intent on mainstreaming policy/action on these, whether agencies have defined policies and/or specific activities to address inequity/discrimination, extent to which there is training on these issues, etc) and (b) their viewpoints on the type of support required from a gender and/or women's rights capacity in the Office of the UN Coordinator.

- Analyze, summarize and prepare a report on the findings.

Timeframe: 15 days

Budget: Consultancy plus travel/expenses

1. Introduction

1.1 Although gender is one of the key issues for the aid community in Afghanistan, it is often an area marked by lack of understanding, varied approaches, and structural neglect. While most agencies pay lip-service to the importance of gender mainstreaming and programming, often there is little material result.

1.2 Several attempts have been made since 1995 to provide greater support for gender mainstreaming and programming within the UN and by extension for the larger aid community, including proposals for a Resource Center and a Gender Advisor position. The Resource Center was never developed, while a Gender Advisor position was created within the UN in 1999. This position has been vacant since April, 2001.

1.3 This review was conducted at the request of the Human Rights Advisor (HRA) to determine the current perceived needs within the aid community of the type of support required from a gender and/or women's rights advisor in the UN Coordinator's Office (UNCO). It also attempts to map-out the current approaches/policies to issues of gender within the aid community.

2. Methodology

2.1 Twenty five people from seventeen agencies were interviewed regarding the current state of gender programming and mainstreaming in their agencies and their perceived needs regarding the Gender Advisor position in UNCO. The interviews were largely conducted in person, while a minority were conducted by email or telephone due to time and geographical constraints. It proved impossible to contact or elicit responses from a number of colleagues, primarily in Afghanistan.

3. Current Status of Gender Mainstreaming:

3.1 UN Agencies

3.1.1 UN staff report different levels of commitment to gender mainstreaming and gender sensitive programming depending upon the Agency. However, all UN staff interviewed stated that much more needed to be done to develop and promote the gender agenda. Most women staff, at all levels, complained of lack of support or hostility to, gender mainstreaming and gender issues by male colleagues of all levels. There was particular concern voiced regarding the commitment to the hiring, mobility and safety of local women staff working in Afghanistan, as well as the support for international women staff when they were faced with hostility or harassment related to their gender.

3.1.2 On-the-ground programming in Afghanistan was reported to be very weak in general, including but not specifically gender. Access to Afghan women and their participation in programming were seen as key issues in dealing with the Taliban, as well

as finding ways of monitoring to ensure that emergency assistance programming does not discriminate against women. One agency stated that gender has never been a very targeted strategy for them even though their programming has dealt extensively with girls' and women's issues and that a stronger push from the gender advisor regarding minimal gender components in their programming and the documentation of basic developments regarding gender in their programming areas would be extremely helpful.

3.2 International NGOs

3.2.1 The international NGOs interviewed stated that despite their general acknowledgement of gender mainstreaming as a priority throughout the NGO community, much work needed to be done. In interviews, staff noted that almost all heads of NGOs are men, as are the heads of most programming groups. There was general consensus that while gender mainstreaming had been prioritized in documents, there was in general little being done to actually implement it. There was also wide consensus that gender training occurred infrequently and with little to no follow-up, and therefore had little material impact on the structure and programming of most NGOs. The Women's Commission reports that they are working on several projects, such as a Gender Working Group with both NGO and UN participation, and they would very much like the involvement of the United Nations Gender Advisor (UN GA) in these projects. They state that they are largely focussing on information gathering and research, and would welcome the opportunity to provide resources for gender trainings initiated by the GA.

3.3 Afghan NGOs

3.3.1 The agencies complain that there is little understanding of gender, even its definition, among staff at all levels, including agency directors, and that much greater support and resources are needed to truly begin the process of gender mainstreaming. Gender is usually understood only as women's programming and women are usually hired only in traditional roles.

3.3.2 One NGO has found that by basic commitments to gender mainstreaming, such as commitment to female hiring at low levels followed by on-the-job training and promotion, as well as gender training and awareness that takes account of the local cultural norms and sensitivities, they have been able to overcome the deep-seated resistance of male colleagues to female employment and have tremendously increased their numbers of female staff, at all levels, within two years. This was made possible through a grant by a donor that supported a gender focus program together with other NGOs. Currently, they have instituted a gender policy together with seven other local Afghan NGOs which focuses on office and agency policy rather than beneficiaries. Most NGOs recognize the lip-service that needs to be paid to gender issues, but they stress the need for support, in the form of training, resources, and advocacy that they feel needs to come from the UN GA.

4. Primary Areas of Need

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 Taking the lead on policy issues related to gender is strongly viewed by UN and NGO staff as a high priority for the GA. The international NGOs also clearly state that they need a UN GA who will clarify what the UN is doing in terms of gender policy and mainstreaming and then provide support for members of the assistance community working in these areas.

4.1.2 Among UN staff, the development of policies for gender programming on the ground, and taking the lead on practical issues on the ground, helping to develop strategies, were repeatedly mentioned. Education and health of girls and women, as well as medium-term capacity building, were widely noted as key policy issues the GA should be working in. In addition, some people working in the field mentioned that the GA should play an active role in adding depth to the discussion of gender issues as they relate to Principled Common Programming and aid conditionality.

4.2 Advocacy

4.2.1 Many people felt that gender advocacy, (in a broader sense that involves the roles and rights of men as well as women, not just women's rights issues), was a crucial role for the GA. However, almost all interviewees mentioned that, given the current situation on the ground in Afghanistan, although the GA should adopt a broad view of gender issues, women's rights issues are going to play a very large role for the GA for the foreseeable future.

4.2.2 Many people stated that the GA should be very visible, and present at all level of discussion and in all important missions. Visibility was clearly viewed as a key to advocacy by most people. Afghan NGOs in particular voiced the need for a strong force behind them to facilitate their work with women, especially in rural areas. They saw the strength and visibility of the UN GA as part of this support they need, and stated that they need UN protection, especially in areas related to women.

4.2.3 The NGO community, both international and Afghan, very much looks to the UN as a necessary working partner. On gender issues, the Afghan NGOs state that it is a necessity that the GA provide the international policies and 'cover' that they can use to support their programming in Afghanistan and their negotiations with the authorities. In addition, NGOs look to the UN GA to provide them with policy statements on gender that they can use to support their own programming and mainstreaming goals, support of resources and coordination, high profile advocacy on gender issues, and gender training that bears the UN imprimatur.

4.2.4 Adolescents were mentioned as a particularly vulnerable group by several UN Agencies and NGOs who feel they need special attention from the GA. The strict and

repressive gender roles in Afghanistan pose an array of particular problems for adolescents in the areas of education, health and development.

4.2.5 Additionally, agencies working in girls' education stated that high level advocacy on the part of the GA on girls' education was crucial for them. These agencies stated that the GA should allocate a large portion of her time to education issues, advocating not just in a policy role to the authorities, but also to donors and other agencies. In addition to girls' education, increasing Afghan women's employment was also stated as a crucial advocacy issue.

4.2.6 One UN agency stated that they would like to see the GA keep track of who is being recruited and hired, and develop a system to evaluate staff on the basis of gender mainstreaming priorities.

4.3 Programming

4.3.1 Most of the NGOs interviewed felt that there was no need for the GA to try to duplicate the work already being undertaken by the women's community and NGOs regarding gender-sensitive programming. Instead they state that many of their projects and gender focal points are in desperate need of resource, training and capacity building support from the UN GA.

4.3.2 Among the UN staff interviewed there was strong feeling that the GA needs to encourage agencies to engage women at the local level regarding programming in a much more active way than most of them currently do. There was also a feeling that the GA should play a strong role in creating on-going discussions of gender issues and in re-evaluating programming in relation to women's participation through forcing questions and providing empirical evidence.

4.3.3 There was some feeling among UN people in the field that the GA could make a programming difference in peripheral and non-Taliban controlled areas, but that in Taliban-controlled areas there was little the GA could do except provide resource and advocacy support for on-the-ground programming, especially by NGOs. However, Afghan NGOs as well as some Afghan UN staff voiced the strong desire for the GA to be actively and consistently engaged with the Taliban on issues related to gender and programming. These people felt that the involvement of the authorities was very important and could be helpful.

4.3.4 The role of gender as a key element of human development, and its relationship to life skills and not just survival skills, was highlighted by several interviewees as of crucial importance to programming.

4.4 Resource Support

4.4.1 Both within the UN and the NGO communities there was strong desire for the GA to bring outside resource persons to the area to provide seminars, trainings and lectures to

help develop and nurture ongoing discussions of gender issues and women's rights as they pertain to the region and the larger world.

4.4.2 People in the field also mentioned the need for making gender progressive literature and gender trainings linguistically accessible.

4.5 Gender Training and Gender Mainstreaming

4.5.1 Most people interviewed, and all NGOs, mentioned the necessity of the GA's support for gender training and follow-up as a crucial aspect of the position. Most NGO staff did not feel that the GA had to initiate a full series of gender trainings. Instead, people stated that they would like to see the office share its resources to help NGOs build and develop solid gender training and follow-up programs, and other local resources. They felt that one of the biggest problems the NGOs, especially the Afghan NGOs, faced in addressing issues of gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive programming was the severe lack of a centralized support to develop local resources.

4.5.2 However, people at both the UN and NGO level noted that while local capacities need to be encouraged, it is crucial for the GA to promote and provide gender training at high UN levels in order for gender mainstreaming and a greater commitment to gender sensitive programming to become a reality. Gender training is seen as a crucial aspect of moving forward the gender agenda, and most people interviewed strongly felt that a much harder line needed to be taken in promoting, and even imposing, gender training at all levels. The GA is widely viewed as having responsibility for this level of promotion and support for gender training. The development of guidelines for gender programming for both senior and lower level staff, with clear explanations and definitions of issues, were stated by several UN staff to be highly important. In addition, the need to clarify and focus the relationship of culture to gender and development in these materials was highlighted.

4.6 Coordination on Gender Issues

4.6.1 Most NGOs, especially, felt that there needed to be much more sharing of information within the aid community as to what the common gender issues are. The GA was seen as key to coordinating and prioritizing core issues for the community to focus on and for what purpose. The development of areas of mutual concern, alongside the recognition of different strategies and how they work, was stated as necessary in the development of one voice with which the aid community could speak on certain gender issues.

4.6.2 The majority of people interviewed, cutting across all agencies and levels, stated that the GA needed to develop a task force or working group of UN and NGO gender focal points through which to coordinate issues of policy and advocacy, as well as facilitating information sharing and resource development. This task force was seen as important in supporting the GA role in promoting gender awareness and mainstreaming widely throughout agencies rather than just through individual gender advisors. In

addition, people view such a committee as a necessity in locating and prioritizing core issues, and the establishment of specific goals in addressing these issues.

4.6.3 There was also strong feeling by many people interviewed that the GA should coordinate and share information with groups outside the region as well. These people felt that by addressing not just issues on the ground, but outside groups as well, the GA would be able to help redress the feeling shared by many aid workers that women's groups outside the region work at cross-purposes with them and often make their work more difficult. This was seen as a strong way of building international support for on the ground gender issues, and publicising positive as well as the well known negative aspects of gender and women's lives in relation to Afghanistan.

4.7 Information Clearinghouse and Research

4.7.1 International NGOs report the need for support in the areas of information sharing and gender training. Several stated that they would like the GA to pull together documents relating to gender in the UN system and share it with the NGOs, as well as possibly establishing some sort of clearinghouse for information sharing.

4.7.2 In addition, the development of common indicators, training and support of NGOs in the gathering of gender-segregated data, and the regular preparation and dissemination of up-date papers from the GA were widely viewed as a necessary element in the development of solid information regarding gender issues in Afghanistan. In addition, several people felt that the diversity of women's roles in Afghanistan needs to be studied and discussed, including silenced groups such as widows and disabled women.

4.7.3 Several Afghan staff, both NGO and UN, stated that the GA needed to have regular contact with the Taliban authorities, to translate and explain gender to them. These people felt that the Taliban only understood gender as women's rights and needed to be educated as to its relevance to Afghan culture as a whole.

4.8 Support and Development for Women Staff and Afghan Women's Networks and Leadership

4.8.1 The need for more programming and support for women, both international and national, working in the aid community was mentioned as a large concern by many of those interviewed. The GA was perceived as the capacity that should be coordinating greater awareness of and support for women staff.

4.8.2 Also mentioned was the need for the GA to support the development of Afghan women's networks and leadership, including bringing Afghan women to the center of discussions who can articulate the diverse needs of Afghan women.

4.8.3 Gender balance and equity were located as the key for agencies' gender mainstreaming and programming by several interviewees. The need to develop feelings

of solidarity among local women, and between local and international women, was mentioned by both UN and NGO staff as a great necessity.

4.8.4 International Staff

4.8.4.1 Both within the UN and the international NGO community, people spoke of the need for the GA to act as an advocate for international women staff regarding issues of harassment, stress and security concerns.

4.8.4.2 Many people spoke of the undermining of professional women staff that occurs through the perceived and often demonstrable lack of support from their male colleagues and the larger UN structures. The example of women being asked to leave meetings by the Taliban and receiving no support from their male colleagues was repeatedly mentioned, as was the lack of women in positions where they visibly interacted with the Taliban. The people interviewed, both men and women, felt this was evidence of a lack of strong policies and guidelines regarding the role of professional women staff in a highly politicized environment where gender was one of the key programming, capacity building and negotiating concerns. These people felt that the GA should undertake and vocally support the development of guidelines supporting women staff when they are threatened and sidelined.

4.8.4.3 In addition, people felt that there were particularly high levels of stress that women staff in particular were forced to deal with in an environment they perceive as strongly and often violently antagonistic to women. This ranged from issues of workplace harassment and lack of support from male colleagues to the sense that security concerns were geared toward men and did not take into account the ways in which women feel they are particularly targeted.

4.8.5 National Staff

4.8.5.1 The needs of Afghan and Pakistani staff working for the UN were also stated as an area that the GA should be supporting. The lack of support by some UN agencies for their national women staff, especially regarding security, was a broad concern. One example given was that of one agency, which reputedly flies its Afghan male staff from location to location within Afghanistan when they need to travel, but forces the women staff to travel by jeep due to the presence of their mahrams (a male relative travelling companion, which is mandated by the Taliban) and possibly a perceived conflict with the Taliban over flying them on UNOCHA airplanes. This leaves the women staff in a much less secure position than that of the men. Other agencies are willing to pay the additional cost of the mahrams, and do not discriminate between male and female staff when making travel arrangements. In addition, women national staff, especially Afghan, are much more vulnerable to harassment than their international women colleagues, and there was broad consensus among those interviewed that the GA needs to strongly address this issue.

4.8.6 Women's Networks and Leadership

4.8.6.1 Support and capacity building by the GA to help build and develop strong networks among Afghan women in the Peshawar area was widely mentioned by international and Afghan NGOs as very important. They perceived the current lack of qualified women available to apply for staff openings in NGOs, as well as the lack of a strong organization of Afghan women to voice and support the diverse needs of Afghan women, as a serious capacity building concern. The NGOs are acutely aware that even if the GA is able to support much stronger gender-mainstreaming in the Afghan NGOs much more work needs to be done in the capacity building of the larger community in order to begin to develop a broader pool of applicants.

5. Assessment

5.1 There is unanimity on the need for a GA position, and broad consensus on tasks and functions to be performed in this position, especially policy formulation, mainstreaming gender in agencies and programming, and coordination. Gender mainstreaming from the senior level down and its inclusion in project proposals is widely viewed as necessary.

5.2 Qualifications: Almost universally those interviewed stated that the GA should be a woman who is a specialist in gender and has a strong understanding of Muslim women's issues in the current context of Afghanistan's history, culture, and relationship to Islam.

5.2.1 Many also stated that the GA should have high professional standards, good communication skills, and the ability to build strong networks. She should have a very good knowledge of the workings of the assistance community and education and development issues, and she should have worked in a "difficult" or "third-world" Muslim environment.

5.2.2 The GA should be very strong in setting policy, able to influence heads of agencies on gender issues, and a strong advocate both within the region and externally with donors and "western" feminist organizations. She should be consistent in her networking, information-sharing, contact with the Authorities and policy and programming work.

5.2.3 Agencies working in education stated that a knowledge of the context and history of girls' education in Afghanistan was crucial for the GA.

5.3 Visible UN support for position: Afghan NGOs and some UN staff explicitly warned the UN not to hire a figure-head who was not given the support necessary to do a strong job. They strongly felt that this would be far more damaging in regard to their on-going work in the field and relations with the Taliban regarding gender than to hire nobody at all. By voicing this fear, they are giving voice to their suspicions that the UN is not committed to strong gender programming. Strong regular contact between the GA and the NGO community, and high visibility, is crucial in alleviating these fears. In addition, most people interviewed mentioned the need for strong UN resource support to the position, and the hiring of somebody who is good at resource mobilization.

5.4 Coordination: Most people would specifically like to see the GA establish a task force or a working group made up of the gender focal points of different agencies. This group should meet on a regular basis and provide the basic networking structure for building a stronger inter-agency gender community. This group will support the GA in policy formulation, advocacy and information sharing.

5.5 Ombuds role: There was strong feeling among both UN and NGO staff that the GA, in addition to her other activities, should serve in almost an Ombuds role for women staff. People across agencies wished to have a GA that served as an advocate and advisor for staff facing gender-related workplace problems.

5.6 Advocacy role: Advocacy is widely considered a crucial aspect of the GA position. Girls' education and adolescents were located by several agencies as areas of crucial and specific concern.

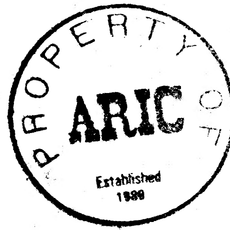
5.7 Resource and Information clearinghouse: The GA should act as an information clearinghouse for gender related information on Afghanistan.

5.8 Presence in Peshawar and support for Afghan women's network building: The GA should maintain a strong and consistent presence and contact with the Peshawar-based assistance community, and help build Afghan women's networks among the refugee communities.

5.9 Gender mainstreaming: The GA is widely viewed as responsible for the strong promotion, and where necessary, imposition of gender training at all levels of Agencies. Since gender training is viewed as crucial to the advancement of the gender agenda, from the level of gender-sensitive programming to that of gender mainstreaming, the GA's coordination of, resource support for and development of gender training is viewed as a necessity.

5.10 The needs for the position that were uncovered by this review are clearly more than any one person can reasonably be expected to accomplish. Several people interviewed stated the need for a very clear TOR that would set up a timetable of specific tasks for the GA to prevent her from being completely overwhelmed, and provide a clear balance between policy and programming. The setting of priorities for the position, either prior to hiring or by the new hire herself, is clearly very necessary.

UN GENDER ADVISOR ROLE:
Survey of Aid Worker Perceptions



Prepared by:
Anne Cubilié

For:
Human Rights Advisor
UN Coordinator's Office
Islamabad, 21 June, 2001

TABLE OF CONTENTS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This review was conducted at the request of the Human Rights Advisor to determine the current perceived needs within the aid community of the type of support required from a gender and/or women's rights advisor in the UN Coordinator's Office.

2. Twenty five people from seventeen agencies were interviewed regarding the current state of gender programming and mainstreaming in their agencies and their perceived needs regarding the Gender Advisor position in UNCO.

3. UN staff report different levels of commitment to gender, but they all stated that much more needed to be done to develop and promote the gender agenda. There was particular concern regarding the commitment to the hiring, mobility and safety of local women staff working in Afghanistan.

4. International NGOs stated that despite the general acknowledgement of gender mainstreaming as a priority in documents, there was in general little being done to actually implement it. There was also wide consensus that gender training occurred infrequently and with little to no follow-up, and therefore had little material impact on the structure and programming of most NGOs.

5. Afghan NGOs complain that there is little understanding of gender, even its definition, among staff at all levels, including agency directors, and that much greater support and resources are needed to truly begin the process of gender mainstreaming. Most NGOs stress the need for support, in the form of training, resources, and advocacy that they feel needs to come from the UN GA.

6. It was the consensus of those interviewed that there should be a GA position with certain tasks and functions, especially in the fields of policy formulation, mainstreaming gender in agencies and programming and inter-agency coordination.

7. It was the consensus of those interviewed that the GA should;

   i. take the lead on policy issues related to gender
   ii. clarify what the UN is doing in terms of gender policy and mainstreaming and provide support for members of the assistance community working in these areas
   iii. advocate for gender mainstreaming in programs and agencies
   iv. become very visible and present at all levels of discussion
   v. organize and provide gender focal points with resources, training and capacity building
   vi. encourage agencies to engage women at the local level regarding programming in a much more active way than most of them currently do
   vii. act as an information clearinghouse for gender related information on Afghanistan
   viii. maintain a strong and consistent presence and contact with the Peshawar-based assistance community, and help build Afghan women's networks and leadership among the refugee communities
   ix. be responsible for the strong promotion of gender training at all levels of agencies
   x. establish a task force or a working group made up of the gender focal points of different agencies to provide the basic networking structure for building a stronger inter-agency gender community, and support the GA in policy formulation, advocacy and information sharing
   xi. provide more support for women, both international and national, working in the aid community